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imparting the fascination to his readers seems to us justified. The story is certainly "light," but whether it is "too prolific of natural history" may be questioned.

The scene of the story is laid in the forests of the Athabasca, in which a lad of fourteen spends the winter in the charge of a half-breed trapper. The interest of the story lies in the successful efforts of the animals of the region to save their skins from the trapper, and later in the endeavors of Mooswa, a moose whom the boy once befriended, to save the boy from starvation.

If the book is an attempt to convey, in the form of a story, knowledge of the ways of animals, it is a failure, for whatever truth it may contain is obscured by a bewildering amount of romance. Thus when the fox is caught in a trap, the beaver gnaws off his foot, and the Canada Jay sews the skin over the stump with his beak. If the author has tried to make a good tale, after the pattern of the Jungle Books, he has failed through lack of the requisite literary skill. The story is presumably intended for boys, but even boys, if fed on Kipling and Seton-Thompson, would tire of the idle chatter which is put into the mouths of the principal interlocutors. The book is by no means bad; there are humorous situations, and even moments of interest, approaching excitement. A decade ago it might have proved acceptable, but the standard of excellence in such matters has been set too high, by the creators of Mowgli and Wab, for any but skillful artists to hope for success in the field. The illustrations are far superior to the text.

R. H.

Miller's Key to the Land Mammals of Eastern North America.[1]— Probably no recent contribution to the literature of North American mammalogy will be so gratefully and widely welcomed as Mr. Miller's brief synopsis of the land mammals of eastern North America. So great has been the increase in our knowledge of the subject during the last fifteen years, so radical the changes in nomenclature, so different the present methods of investigation, and so scattered the literature that has been the outcome of this renaissance, that only the few specialists engaged in the work could hope to keep in touch with the subject. The general student hence found himself hopelessly lost in intricate labyrinths in any attempt he might make to gain a clear conception of the results thus far reached, in even a limited

[1] Miller, Gerrit S. Key to the Land Mammals of Eastern North America, *Bulletin of the New York State Museum*, vol. viii (October, 1900), No. 38, pp. 59-160.

field. Mr. Miller's Key gives at once a bird's-eye view of the scene, and directs the inquirer where further information may be obtained.

The geographical scope of the work includes "the entire mammalian fauna of the Atlantic slope of North America north of the southern boundary of the upper austral zone," or the Atlantic slope from Hudson Bay to the southern boundary of what is commonly known as the "Carolinian Fauna." The Mississippi drainage area is thus wholly excluded. A brief introduction defines the life zones of the region and the plan of the Key, followed by a synopsis, giving a classified list of the higher groups, species and subspecies. Then comes the Key proper, supplying diagnoses of all the groups from class to subspecies, subfamilies and subgenera excepted. Under each species and subspecies are given "references to (1) the first publication of the specific or subspecific name, (2) first use of the binomial or trinomial combination, and (3) a recent monographic paper in which the form is described in detail. . . . The type locality is given in parenthesis after the first reference. The accented syllable of all technical names is marked by an accent; and the derivation of each name is placed in parenthesis at the end of the diagnosis." A paragraph, in larger type, follows the diagnosis, giving the distribution of the species or subspecies under consideration. The Key is thus intended to give the correct nomenclature for all the forms treated, with a clue to their identification, and a brief statement of their geographical ranges, generally indicated by a reference to the "life zone" they inhabit. This admirable brochure is thus what it claims to be, a "key" to the subject, and an aid to the acquisition of further information. That the work was greatly needed, has been well done, and will prove a "boon" to seekers of knowledge in this field, it is needless to further affirm.

The Key was originally planned to form part of Mr. Miller's recently published "Preliminary List of the Mammals of New York" (see *American Naturalist*, April, 1900, pp. 316–318), but "soon grew to the proportions of an independent paper," and was finally extended to include a larger area. The Key, we regret to see, repeats the few errors of nomenclature of the list, to one of which attention has already been called in this journal (*loc. cit.*, p. 318), namely, the highly questionable basis of the specific name "americanus" for the Virginia deer. Another case is the use of the specific name "hudsonica Desmarest" (1803) for the otter. As we have already shown (*Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.*, Vol. X, 1898,

pp. 459, 460), canadensis Schreber (1778) is perfectly tenable for this species, for those who accept names based on plates, as does Mr. Miller in the case of the mink, *Putorius vison* (Schreber), which rests on the same basis as *Lutra canadensis* (Schreber) for the otter. Moreover, the name "canadensis" had been in almost universal use for this species till two years ago, when an unfortunate attempt was made to replace it by "hudsonica," of twenty-five years later origin.

Another case that may be mentioned is the use of the generic name "Rosmarus" for the walruses instead of the prior name "Odobenus." Rosmarus Scopoli dates from 1777; Odobenus Brisson from 1756, becoming perfectly tenable from Brisson's second edition of his *Règne Animal*, published in 1762, or fifteen years before the tenable date of Rosmarus. We can hardly believe Mr. Miller has given these points due consideration.

There are no really new innovations in the technical nomenclature, but a new subspecies of the common deer is described on p. 83, under the name *Odocoileus americanus borealis*. The number of species treated is 105, with thirty-three additional subspecies.

J. A. A.

Pectoral Girdle of Reptiles. — Professor Max Fürbringer's[1] long interrupted studies on the comparative anatomy of the pectoral girdles and their muscles and nerves in vertebrates have been continued in a fourth part devoted to these organs in the Amphisbænia and the reptiles. The first 150 pages are devoted to an extended account of the skeletal elements of the pectoral girdles, breastbone, and humerus, including these parts in the fossil as well as in the recent representatives of the groups under consideration. This is followed by an account of the nerves to the shoulder muscles, after which a very exhaustive description of the shoulder muscles themselves is given. A final discussion of over 150 pages deals in a comparative way with the facts brought forward in the descriptive part and concludes with remarks on the phylogenetic relationships of the groups of reptiles to one another, to the birds, and to the lower vertebrates as shown by the structure of the parts described. The illustrations, some seventy figures in all, are beautifully clear and exact, and with the text constitute a work of monumental proportions.

P.

[1] Fürbringer, M. Zur vergleichenden Anatomie des Brustschulterapparates und der Schulterumskiln, *Jena. Zeitschrift für Naturwissenschaft*, Bd. xxxiv (September, 1900), pp. 215–718, Taf. XIII–XVII.